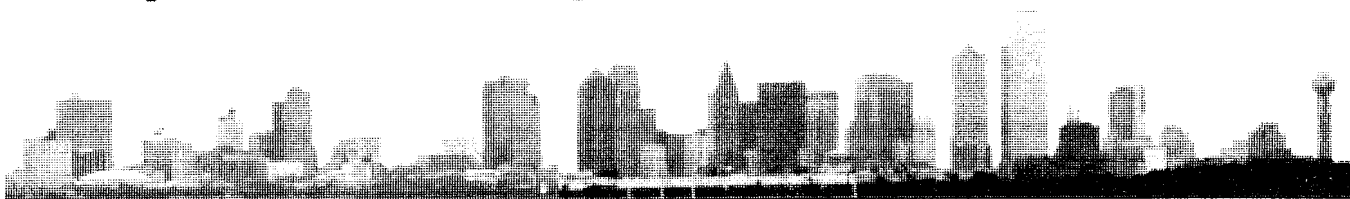


MCCC NEWS

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club



Fort Worth

Volume 12 Issue 11 — December 1994

Dallas

Workbench 3.1

review by William Near

from The Amiga Report issue 2.30 — october 24, 1994

A miga Workbench v3.1 for the A500/A2000
(Kickstart version - 40.63 --- Workbench version - 40.42)

PURCHASED FROM: Expert Services

(606) 371-9690 — Orders

(606) 282-5942 — BBS

PRICE: I paid \$130 U.S. This includes \$5 S&H

There are other people selling the Workbench (WB) 3.1 kits for as much as \$225 U.S., so shop around to get the best price. Note: There are substantiated reports of pirate copies of WB 3.1 being sold. These bogus kits are just Xeroxed copies of the manuals and copies of the disks.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: Amiga 500/2000 hard drive recommended, but not necessary

SYSTEM TESTED ON: Amiga 2000 (Rev 4.4), ECS chipset, GForce '030 accelerator 50MHz., 1 meg CHIP + 6 megs FAST memory, 2 standard floppy drives, Quantum LPS270S hard drive with Trumpcard Professional controller.

PACKAGING: Workbench 3.1 came with Workbench, AmigaDOS, and ARexx manuals (the manuals are the plain paperback type, not the nice 3-ring binder type I received with WB 2.04), an AmigaDOS quick reference card, a 3.1 ROM installation instruction sheet, a 3.1 ROM chip, and six disks.

NOTE: This review is written with the assumption that you have previously used Workbench v2.04, 2.05, or 2.1. It would make this review ten times longer if I had to compare this Workbench to the pre-2.x releases. So, all references to new features will be written on a Workbench 2.x comparison basis.

INSTALLATION: The instruction sheet contains the necessary steps for installing the 3.1 ROM in either an A500 or A2000 computer. I will briefly cover the special notes for each installation just so you'll know what you're getting into here. For the A500 motherboard Rev. 3 & 5, the 3.1 ROM must have Pin 1 jumpered to Pin 31 and for Rev 6A and above the 3.1 ROM requires no jumper. For the older A2000s with the motherboard marked "1989 COMMODORE AMIGA 2000 MADE IN GERMANY (BSW) or for Rev. 3 motherboards, the 3.1 ROM must have Pin 1 jumpered to Pin 31, for Rev. 4 and higher motherboards, no jumper is needed. The ROM I received came with no jumper wire attached, but I didn't need one anyway. The new ROM was easily installed into my MultiStart ROM switcher after removing my old 2.04 ROM.

I chose to reformat my entire hard drive with the new version of the Fast File System (FFS) included with WB 3.1 (note: I did NOT use the directory caching feature of the new FFS because I also boot up in WB 1.3 from the hard drive and the older OS would not recognize the hard drive as a valid DOS disk if directory caching were present.) The representative at Expert Services said that I could expect a 10-20% increase in hard drive reads/writes by using the new FFS — the speed increase was more like 5-10% in actual use as determined by SysInfo v3.24. Any speed increase is welcome and it didn't take that long to back up the crucial information on my hard drive. I just booted up the computer with the WB 3.1 disks after installing the 3.1 ROM and accessed the hard drive using the HDToolbox program.

The software uses the Commodore Installer program which makes things run quite smoothly. If you have previously installed Workbench v2.x then you should be familiar with this process. If you have a previous version of Workbench installed on your hard drive then the

Installer program will delete any old files that are unnecessary to the new version of the Workbench and it will also preserve any preferences and user-startup scripts you are using.

A NEW LOOK AND FEEL: WB 3.1 has a new 3-D look to the windows and sliders that adds some professionalism to the Workbench. It uses the exact same pulldown

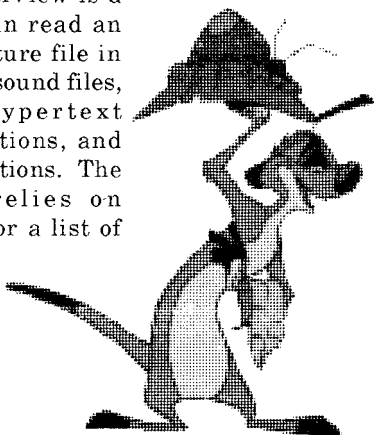
Graphics rendering is significantly accelerated due to the completely rewritten graphics and layers libraries. You can definitely notice the difference, especially with screen refreshes and when scrolling text.

menus as WB 2.x does, so things won't look all that different if you're used to WB 2.x. The differences are somewhat subtle, but there is some real power lurking underneath.

The back of the Workbench box claims improved support for graphics boards e.g. Picosso II RTG with up to 1600x1200 pixels in 256 colors (I can't verify this since I don't have a 24bit card.) The graphics rendering is also significantly accelerated due to the completely rewritten graphics and layers libraries. You can definitely notice the difference, especially with the screen refreshes and when scrolling text etc.

The following sections contain a description of what objects are contained within each drawer of the new WB 3.1 — they do not list every object in each drawer, just things that have been changed or added with the new WB release. All unlisted objects are assumed to be the same from WB 2.x to WB 3.1.

UTILITIES: The Utilities drawer contains a program called MultiView. MultiView is a powerful utility that can read an IFF text file, view a picture file in almost any format, play sound files, view AmigaGuide hypertext documents, play animations, and perform many other functions. The MultiView utility relies on DataTypes (see below for a list of included DataTypes) to access the many types of formats available to the Amiga. A DataType is a description of the data to be used, you can get DataTypes for virtually



anything you want to view, play, read, or whatever. DataTypes are included with WB 3.1 and others are available on many BBS's and commercial services, such as: GENie, CompuServe, etc. If you can't find a DataType for a file format you want to manipulate with MultiView then just write one for yourself!

The MultiView icon can open a standard file requester or, because it is an AppWindow, it can just open a window on the Workbench screen into which you can drag various icons. Just drag a sound file into the MultiView window and a little speaker icon will appear in the window. Click on the speaker icon and the sound will be played. When you load an animation file into MultiView you will get a VCR-type control panel for manipulating the animation with FastForward, Reverse, Play buttons and a slider for jumping to any part of the animation. This is a very powerful utility that's fun to use!

Although the Say utility is not included with WB 3.1 you can easily enable it by copying the necessary files from an old WB 1.3 disk. It works flawlessly under WB 3.1.

TOOLS: The Tools drawer contains one new commodity program, a mouse blanker. The mouse blanker is very simple, just double click its icon to enable it. Whenever you type at the keyboard the pointer will disappear. To make the pointer reappear just move the mouse. I would have liked to see a better mouse blanker that would allow a user-defined time limit before blanking the mouse.

SYSTEM: Nothing new here.

DEVS: The Devs drawer contains the DataTypes used by MultiView, some new Monitor drivers, and a CD-ROM DOSDriver.

The DataTypes included with WB 3.1 are:

- 8SVX - IFF sound files
- AmigaGuide - Amiga help files
- FTXT - IFF text files
- ANIM - ANIM-format animation files
- CDXL - CDXL-format animation files
- ILBM - Bitmap picture files

The new monitor drivers are : DblNTSC, DblPAL, and VGAOnly. The DblNTSC and DblPAL drivers add eight new screen modes:

- DblNTSC
 - High Res Laced - 640 x 800 4 colors
 - High Res No Flicker - 640 x 400 4 colors
 - Low Res Laced - 640 x 800 16 colors
 - Low Res No Flicker - 640 x 400 16 colors
- DblPAL
 - High Res Laced - 640 x 1024 4 colors
 - High Res No Flicker - 640 x 512 4 colors
 - Low Res Laced - 640 x 1024 16 colors
 - Low Res No Flicker - 640 x 512 16 colors

The VGAOnly driver is used when a VGA monitor is attached to the Amiga and the Multiscan screen modes won't work correctly. The VGAOnly driver modifies the

scan rate and will cause the left edge of the screen to flash when scrolling horizontally.

The new CD-ROM DOSDriver (CD0) allows you to access a connected CD-ROM drive by using the device name CD0:. This is quite a nice feature of WB 3.1, now any connected CD-ROM drive shows up as just another Workbench icon like any other device — no other software is necessary for basic CD-ROM access.

PREFERENCES: The Preferences drawer contains new WBPatten, Palette, Pointer, and Overscan preference editors.

The new WBPatten preference editor allows you to place a backdrop image on the Workbench, windows, and screen. The images can be different from one another. So, you could have one image inside any open windows, another image inside the Workbench window (providing you have the Workbench/Backdrop feature disabled), and yet another image on the actual screen behind the Workbench window! Of course you can still use the boring pattern selection and choose one of the eight pre-defined patterns or draw one of your own. Who would want to use the same old patterns when they can select any IFF image to use? This is a very nice feature of the new Workbench — no more hacks needed to accomplish this feat. Besides, the hacks I saw were only able to place an image as the backdrop to Workbench, now you get three choices that you can use!

The new Palette preference editor is totally reworked from previous incarnations. The set of color blocks are located at the upper left corner of the editor. You can click on any one of the colors to set its new value. The colors can be adjusted by one of four means: Red Green Blue sliders, Color Wheel, Gradient slider, or Hue Saturation Brightness sliders.

Red Green Blue sliders — These are the familiar sliders found on previous versions of WB.

Color Wheel — Selecting the Color Wheel bar from the main palette editing screen brings up a color wheel with a pointer inside of it. You can drag the pointer around the color wheel with your mouse to change the basic color of the selected block.

Gradient Slider — The Gradient Slider works in conjunction with the Color Wheel. As you move the pointer around the color wheel the gradient slider, off to the right, changes its range of possible colors according to the position of the pointer on the color wheel. You may then move a slider up and down, throughout the range of colors, on the gradient slider. This method allows you to select a more precise shade of the general color selected with the color wheel.

Hue Saturation Brightness sliders (HSB) — You can select this option from the pulldown menu. It replaces the RGB sliders with Hue, Saturation, and Brightness sliders for controlling the colors.

Off to the right of the main palette editor is a list of items to choose from for adjusting certain screen attribute's colors. The list includes:

- Background
- Text
- Important Text
- Bright Edges
- Dark Edges
- Active Window Title Bar
- Active Window Titles
- Menu Background
- Menu Text

At the bottom of the palette screen is a mock representation of a Workbench title bar, a pulldown menu, active and inactive windows, and various buttons and requesters. This allows you to get a visual idea of how any changes you make will appear, instead of having to use your changes and exit the palette editor numerous times. There are also several predefined palettes available from the pulldown menu.

The new palette editor really allows you to change all aspects of how the Workbench will look — this makes it possible to personalize your Workbench like never before.

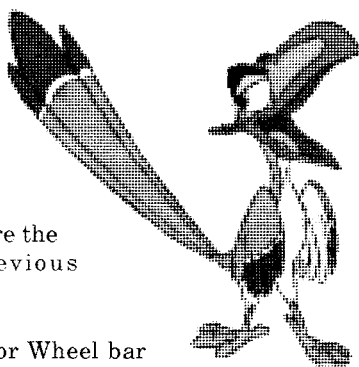
The new Pointer editor allows you to edit both the mouse and busy pointers. If I had an AGA machine then I could have a hi-res mouse pointer and busy pointer, but with an ECS machine I'm still saddled with the lo-res versions.

The new Overscan editor has a nice little addition in the form of four arrows that allow you to make small changes to the screen positioning. By clicking on one of the four arrows you can move the display one pixel at a time in any direction instead of dragging the screen by the center handle (which you can still do if you so choose.)

NEW WORKBENCH FEATURES

The following are new additions to WB 3.1 over the earlier 2.x versions (these come in order of how they appear in the manuals):

Under the Icons/Format Disk menu choice you have a new option called Directory Cache. Directory Cache speeds up the opening of drawers, file requesters, and listings. This feature seems to be of greatest use on floppy disks as their access is considerably slower than hard drives. Directory Cache should only be used on disks and devices that will not be accessed by pre-3.x Workbenches as they will be unreadable by them. This option makes a noticeable difference in accessing data from floppy disks, but due to the incompatibility you will have to avoid using it when



giving data to fellow Amiga users with older versions of Workbench.

The ED menus come in two flavors, contrary to several messages I've read on the Amiga FIDO echo where some people have been saying that it was a bug in the OS! It used to be a secret that you could reap the benefits of the expanded ED menus by renaming the ED-STARTUP file in your S directory. Finally, Commodore has put this little treasure in the manual instead of letting the user rely on word-of-mouth sources or various books and articles on the Amiga. All of the new menu options are fully documented. I highly recommend using the expanded menus because they add many features to ED's operation.

There are many new Early Startup features programmed into the ROM. Here are all of the choices available in the 3.1 ROM:

Disabling Devices and Caches — You can disable devices and caches from a list of available devices. Choose the hard drive partition(s) and/or disk drive(s) you wish to disable from the list and then boot the computer to save valuable memory. If you select the disable CPU Caches option then all Instruction and Data caches will be disabled on 68020, '030, and '040 CPUs.

Choosing Display Options — You can emulate the Original Chip Set (OCS) on earlier Amigas by selecting the OCS button. This will allow you to use older programs that will not run correctly under the Enhanced Chip Set (ECS). Also, you can boot up in PAL or NTSC modes. You must have at least the ECS chipset to use these options. Users of Degradar will find these modes quite useful in getting older and PAL-based programs to work.

Diagnosing Expansion Board Failures — This option will pull up a screen that lists all the available expansion boards installed in your Amiga. The list contains:

Board Number — The number of the expansion board

Manufacturer — The number of the maker of the board

Product Column — The manufacturer's product number for the board

Status Column — The status of the board: Working or Defective

There are a few new AmigaDOS commands:

LOADRESOURCE — This command allows you to preload resources into

memory to cut down on excessive disk swaps on floppy-based systems. You can preload: Libraries, Devices, Fonts, and Catalogs.

REQUESTCHOICE — This command allows you to use custom requesters from ARExx scripts and AmigaDOS. You could set up a custom requester that contains the text "Is it OK to proceed?", and then have OK and CANCEL buttons at the bottom of the requester. This is very nice!

REQUESTFILE — This command allows you to open a standard file requester from AmigaDOS or an ARExx script.

SETKEYBOARD — This command allows you to temporarily redefine the keymap to be used in the current Shell.

HIDDEN MESSAGES: Remember those neat hidden messages that could be found with a weird combination of key presses in Workbenches past? Well, there are some new ones included with WB 3.0 and probably WB 3.1, too! Here are the hints from Denny Atkin's Best Amiga Tips and Secrets book:

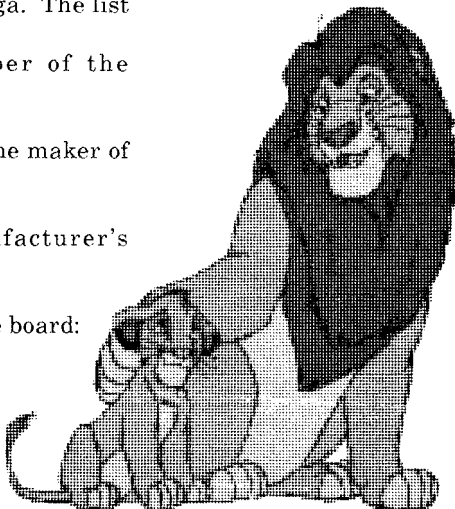
#1 — Control is given to those who are shifted four from the start and do not give up on the alternate course.

#2 — When it is about time to learn the secrets of the master, one must also qualify for enlightenment.

If anyone figures this one out, please leave me some Email at my Internet address telling me how you did it.

SUMMARY: I really love the new Workbench. It is a nice improvement over WB 2.1 and it is definitely worth investing in. I didn't notice too much software incompatibility, on an ECS machine with WB 3.1 you can expect about the same software compatibility as you have been accustomed to under WB 2.x. The addition of the

new 3-D look, added hard drive speed with the new FFS, MultiView, graphics board support, eight new screen modes, CD-ROM support, new Preferences editors, Directory Caching, Early Startup Menus, and the added AmigaDOS commands make Workbench 3.1 a real winner. With the current uncertainty of the future for the Amiga it can't hurt to help support the platform and you would at least have the latest incarnation of the Workbench. Buy it — you won't regret it! ✓



More WB 3.1 Info

important notes regarding the upgrade
from Dan Barrett via the internet

Here is some advice for everyone upgrading from AmigaDOS 2.x to 3.1. I discovered these things the hard way — through trial and error (and help from Net friends). If you are having weird problems after the upgrade, maybe you will find a solution below.

Preferences File Problems

Are you experiencing any weird Preference behavior like the following?

- The busy pointer does not appear.
- The mouse pointer is the wrong color.
- Pointer preferences (and others) don't get saved between reboots.
- The Workbench screen turns strange colors.
- WBPatten backdrops don't work correctly.

The prefs file format apparently changed from AmigaDOS 2.x to 2.x. To solve such problems:

- 1) Run all of your preferences programs and write down (on a piece of paper) all your settings.
- 2) Go to the directory ENV:sys and delete all the files with names ending in ".prefs". (You can copy them to another directory first if you want to be safe.) These are your preferences settings that are created when you click "Save" in a preference program.
- 3) Go to the directory ENVARC:sys and, as above, delete all files with names ending in ".prefs".
- 4) Run all of your preferences programs and re-create all your desired preferences settings (that you wrote down on paper in step 1). Click "Save" after running each program.
- 5) Reboot. All should be OK now.

DO NOT simply run the 3.1 preferences programs change the settings and click "Save". **YOU MUST DELETE YOUR PREFS SETTINGS FILES FIRST.**

Commodities

If you are using the SwitchNTSC commodity, get rid of it. It will crash your system under 2.1 due to (I believe) changes in the Screen structure.

CPUBlit

If you are using CPUBlit, start using the "-b" option, or else it may not work. See the CPUBlit documentation for more details.

Datatypes Not Working?

If you assign LIBS: somewhere in your user-startup file, beware!! The AmigaDOS 2.1 startup-sequence has a

new "Assign add" line:

Assign > NIL: LIBS: SYS:Classes ADD

If you reassign LIBS: and forget to include SYS:Classes, your datatypes will not work. For example, MultiView and WBPatten will work incorrectly or refuse to run.

WShell 2.0

If you are using the PATH: handler from WShell 2.0 and reassign LIBS:, beware of the problem mentioned above. For example, I had in my user-startup: Assign LIBS: PATH:sys:libs,another:libs and forgot about sys:classes. I changed it to Assign LIBS: Path:sys:libs,sys:classes,another:libs

MUI (Magic User Interface)

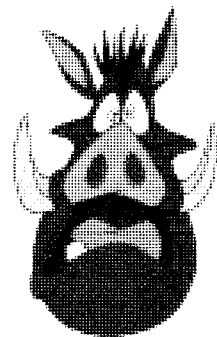
If you use MUI, watch out for a conflict between sys:classes and the MUI "classes" directory. If your datatypes are not working or MUI does not work, this may be the problem. For me, with WShell 2.0's PATH handler, I had to do:

Assign Libs: PATH:sys:Libs,sys:Classes

Assign Libs: usr:Lib/Classes ADD

If you don't use WShell, you might not have a conflict. ✓

**Thought For
The Month**



**If at first you do succeed
Try to hide your astonishment**

Amiga Library News

public domain and shareware picks
from Bill Raecke

Pictures

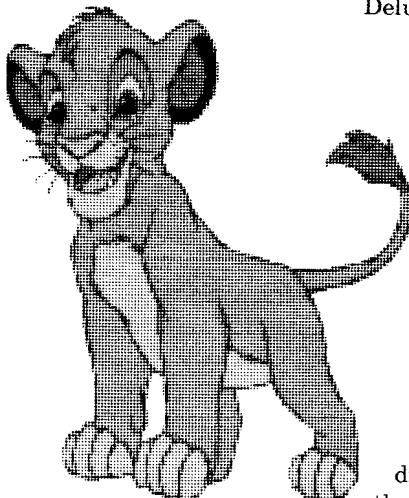
Yes, let's start with pictures this month. For those of you who followed the collision of the Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9's collision with the planet Jupiter a few months back, these may be of interest. On MCCC-A_778 through 780, you'll find 14 pictures in GIF format of the event. Be sure to get them.

SnoopDOS by Eddy Carroll

SnoopDOS has been around for a long time. What it does it monitor the system calls that your applications are making and reports them and the results of those calls. It comes in real handy when running a new piece of PD software that refuses to run because *SnoopDOS* can tell you that what it is looking for is the funky.library or the semiliterate.font. The purpose of *SnoopDOS* remains unchanged, but the look has been totally updated. What we have here, in version 3.0, is a full Intuition driven program with a beautiful 2.x/3.x interface. If you have used *SnoopDOS* in the past, you'll want this update. If you haven't used it, you have probably needed it — now's your chance. It's on MCCC-A_783 this month.

Garshneblanker by Michael D. Bayne

Modular screen blankers have become the latest thing for the Amiga. Following the lead of *SuperDark* in the PC clone world, modular screen blankers provide a variety of blankers under a single umbrella. You control blanker options through an Intuition-driven interface — and the particular blanker activated when screen-blanking is called for can be random if you desire. There are a number of modular blankers available through the library and the BBS. *Magic* is mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter this month — and *SuperDark* is available on MCCC-A_781 this month. But in my (humble) opinion, the best of the lot is *Garshneblanker*. It has the widest variety of blankers (20), the blankers look and work better than most, and it performs without problems. As far as I am concerned, it still won't replace some of my old standbys — particularly *FracBlank* — but *Garshneblanker* is one of the collection that my system selects randomly at bootup. It's worth checking out. It's on MCCC-A_784.



my favorite games. This Amiga version isn't quite as good as the original, but it's fun nonetheless. For those unfamiliar with the game, you are the driver of a taxi. Your job is to pick up passengers and deliver them to their desired destinations without getting into any accidents. But that's easier said than done — because this is a *space* taxi. It flies. Take off by pushing the joystick up. Then press the button to retract the landing gear. After that, direction and speed is controlled by the joystick in the logical fashion. Gravity and inertia are your enemies. And don't forget to extend the landing gear before attempting to land. It's not hard to catch on to and you may find yourself addicted. *Space Taxi* is on MCCC-A_785.

Lion King Clipart

This clipart comes directly from Disney. A \$20 shareware fee is required before you use it commercially. But, as you would expect from Disney, this is **very nice** clipart. You'll see examples throughout the newsletter this month. The collection is large, spanning disks MCCC-A_785 through 788. Enjoy!

Deluxe Galaga by Edgar M. Vigdal

I know, I know... I've written about *Deluxe Galaga* over and over in past newsletters. I can't help it. The game is constantly being improved upon. And it's still one of the very best games I have EVER played. The fact that it's available in our library amazes me. This version removes all bugs and adds a lot of new features. There are now 75 totally different levels — up from the previous 50. Beyond level 75 (yes, as of this writing I have been to level 103 — but level 75 is a killer), the game no longer simply runs faster as it did past level 50 in previous versions — there is variety in the opponents you face.

This makes it much more interesting and varied than previous versions.

Also new is a Concentration-style memory game to rack up extra points, a new 1000 credit bonus for making it to the end of a meteor storm, a new laser-firing opponent that appears randomly throughout the game, and other assorted goodies. The game also stores information about your preferred game settings so that you don't have to reset it every time you fire it up. It remembers your difficulty level, whether you like music or sound effects, etc. All in all, it's a terrific update. It's on disk 789. ✓

Space Taxi by Andreas Spreen

Remember *Space Taxi* from the C-64? It was one of

Heavenly Gates

irreverent humor from the internet
contributed by Jeff Fallen

Bill Gates died and, much to everyone's surprise, went to Heaven. When he got there, he had to wait in the reception area. Heaven's reception area was the size of Massachusetts. There were literally millions of people milling about, living in tents with nothing to do all day. Food and water were being distributed from the backs of trucks, while staffers with clipboards slowly worked their way through the crowd. Booze and drugs were being passed around. Fights were commonplace. Sanitation conditions were appalling. All in all, the scene looked like Woodstock gone metastatic.

Bill lived in a tent for three weeks until, finally, one of the staffers approached him. The staffer was a young man in his late teens, face scarred with acne. He was wearing a blue T-shirt with the words TEAM PETER emblazoned on it in large yellow lettering.

"Hello," said the staffer in a bored voice that could have been the voice of any clerk in any overgrown bureaucracy. "My name is Gabriel and I'll be your induction coordinator." Bill started to ask a question, but Gabriel interrupted him. "No, I'm not the Archangel Gabriel. I'm just a guy from Philadelphia named Gabriel who died in a car wreck at the age of 17. Now give me your name, last name first, unless you were Chinese in which case it's first name first."

"Gates, Bill." Gabriel started searching through the sheaf of papers on his clipboard, looking for Bill's Record of Earthly Works. "What's going on here?" asked Bill. "Why are all these people here? Where's Saint Peter? Where are the Pearly Gates?"

Gabriel ignored the questions until he located Bill's records. Then Gabriel looked up in surprise. "It says here that you were the president of a large software company. Is that right?"

"Yes."

"Well then, do the math chip-head! When this Saint Peter business started, it was an easy gig. Only a hundred or so people died every day, and Peter could handle it all by himself, no problem. But now there are over five billion people on earth. Jesus, when God said to 'go forth and multiply,' he didn't say 'like rabbits!' With that large a population, ten thousand people die every hour. Over a quarter-million people a day. Do you think Peter can meet them all personally?"

"I guess not."

"You guess right. So Peter had to franchise the operation. Now, Peter is the CEO of Team Peter Enterprises, Inc. He just sits in the corporate headquarters and sets policy. Franchisees like me handle the actual inductions." Gabriel looked through his paperwork some more, and then continued. "Your paperwork seems to be in order. And with a background like yours, you'll be getting a plum job assignment."

"Job assignment?"

"Of course. Did you expect to spend the rest of eternity sitting on your ass and drinking ambrosia?"

Heaven is a big operation. You have to pull your weight around here!" Gabriel took out a triplicate form, had Bill sign at the bottom, and then tore out the middle copy and handed it to Bill. "Take this down to induction center #23 and meet up with your occupational orientator. His name is Abraham." Bill started to ask a question, but Gabriel interrupted him. "No, he's not **that** Abraham."

Bill walked down a muddy trail for ten miles until he came to induction center #23. He met with Abraham after a mere six-hour wait.

"Heaven is centuries behind in building its data processing infrastructure," explained Abraham. "As you've seen, we're still doing everything on paper. It takes us a week just to process new entries."

"I had to wait **three** weeks," said Bill. Abraham stared at Bill angrily, and Bill realized that he'd made a mistake. Even in Heaven, it's best not to contradict a bureaucrat. "Well," Bill offered, "maybe that Bosnia thing has you guys backed up."

Abraham's look of anger faded to mere annoyance. "Your job will be to supervise Heaven's new data processing center. We're building the largest computing facility in creation. Half a million computers connected by a multi-segment fiber optic network, all running into a back-end server network with a thousand CPUs on a gigabit channel. Fully fault tolerant. Fully distributed processing. The works."

Bill could barely contain his excitement. "Wow! What a great job! This is really Heaven!"

"We're just finishing construction, and we'll be starting operations soon. Would you like to go see the center now?"

"You bet!"

Abraham and Bill caught the shuttle bus and went to Heaven's new data processing center. It was a truly huge facility, a hundred times bigger than the Astrodome. Workmen were crawling all over the place, getting the miles of fiber optic cables properly installed. But the center was dominated by the computers. Half a million computers, arranged neatly row-by-row, half a million...

... **Amigas!** ...

... all running preemptive multitasking database software! Not a PC in sight! Not a single byte of Microsoft code!

The thought of spending the rest of eternity using products that he had spent his whole life working to destroy was too much for Bill. "What about PCs???" he exclaimed. "What about Windows??? What about Excel??? What about Word???"

"You're forgetting something," said Abraham.

"What's that?" asked Bill plaintively.

"This is Heaven," explained Abraham. "We need a computer system that's heavenly to use. If you want to build a data processing center based on PCs running Windows, then ...

... **GO TO HELL!** ✓

CHAPTER NEWS

Amiga Central Johnny Kitchens

This month's meeting started with a rather exciting election for club officers. In a landslide election, David Owens became our new President, Ned Kelly landed the Vice President position; Mike Sessums the Educational Coordinator; John Malmstrom, Treasurer; and Okley Moss, Secretary.

Our rumor time started off with the usual, the "who owns the Amiga" question. The latest gossip has CEI owning it. We'll see, we'll see. Another interesting tidbit was that *Directory Opus* was about to go to version 5, but INOVAtronics wasn't going to be the distributor. The long awaited *Cyberstorm* is finally out in 40mhz 68040 version. The real excitement of the card is the soon to arrive 50mhz 68060 module that shows 82 mips in operation. To further excite people, an 80mhz 68060 showing 130 mips was announced to be ready as soon as Motorola releases the 68060. Further news came about the new satellite system from RCA. Called Digital Satellite System, it will be a total home entertainment system. What's this got to do with computers? RCA has incorporated a hookup for computers that will allow downloading data from various services at a rate of 10 megs per second!

Although this wasn't talked about at the meeting, I thought it would be worth mentioning here. Friday, November 18, the day after the meeting, I read that Hayes, the modem company, filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Tonight's presentation featured another of our club's valuable members demonstrating his system and some of his favored program setups. David Campbell, using his 4000, gave us a demonstration of *Midnight* first. *Midnight* is a

modular screenblanker. This type of screenblanker allows you to choose different types of screenblanking setups, thus giving you a variety. Perhaps its most unique feature is that it allows the choice of MOD files to play, giving you music to go along with the screenblanker. It's worth seeing just for the fish. David next demonstrated his genealogy setup. Tracking the family tree with this setup should provide plenty of information for anyone to study. Next, David told us of his desire to learn Spanish, and showed us a *CanDo!* setup that allowed him to learn phrases. Apparently his database of phrases had become quite large in a short period of time. It was taking up quite a bit of harddrive space and it took a while to load. Next David showed us a collection of MPEG files. These were quite good! Now if I can just get David to upload them to the BBS! David then showed us his UNIX setup on the Amiga. This particular setup was downloaded from the Internet, and apparently is huge in size, a 250 mb section of his harddrive was set aside just for it. Seeing UNIX in operation certainly can give you an appreciation for the Amiga's operating system in a hurry. Still, UNIX has a dedicated following and is favored by the government. Must be the similarity in operation — big and complex. Finally David wowed us with some games. All were PD and quite good. Thanks David!

Next month's meeting will be a mixture of fun and sadness for the Amiga Central Chapter. Our meeting will be full of fun and goodies. We are going to have several machines set up with games to try, and other software to test. We will have food and drinks to make the fun even better. We will be giving away software, mainly copies of the stuff being demoed on the computers. It should be one heck of a party! The sad part is, that it will be the final meeting of the Amiga

Central Chapter. Chapter meeting attendance decline, increased room cost, and the Commodore situation have contributed to the demise of this chapter. If you have time on December 15th, come on by and be part of the fun and history. I know I will remember Amiga Central for a long time to come!

Amiga North Dallas Genny White

Things were pretty quiet at our November meeting, except for the nice organ music provided by the organist practicing upstairs (a hidden benefit of meeting at a church, donchaknow). There was no news, or rumors of news, about Commodore (was that a dirge playing upstairs?), which made a rather uncomfortable empty spot in the proceedings. There were, however, a few questions, which picked up the pace and lightened the depression a bit. Don Sobiek got a *Doom* clone out of the library, but it requires a "WAD." Whassa "WAD", you ask? It's the game data file that the Doom-style driver reads for maps, beasties, etc. Anyhow, we've got the official PC version and will try to bring some WAD files to the December meeting. I'm afraid our old A500 isn't up to running the Doom-clone software (it needs a 68020 or better, and the AGA chip set), so we'll have to see what we can set up with someone else's machine in December. If we get it to work and it's really neat, maybe we can take a look at it in January as well, for those who miss the December affair. Someone else had problems with two different programs demanding font files bearing the same name but requiring different versions to run... discussion of drawers and assignments ensued. Another member observed that Epson has a 360 dpi inkjet printer out for under \$200, and wondered if there was a driver available.

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Possible answers: try the BBS, where many drivers are available in the club library; check with the manufacturer, who may have updates for various machines; or check the BBS library for documentation on how to write your own driver. I whimpered that my relatively-new 1084S monitor is doing odd things (screen doing jumping jacks occasionally), and I was reminded that Metropolitan can send it out and get it looked at for \$130 (ouch!), or maybe even Montgomery Wards might have some more tucked away in the back that they'd love to get rid of. There was a discussion about how the CD32 can be persuaded to play MPEG full-motion video with the special MPEG module added. Someone else had a SCSI hard drive they wanted to interface to an expanded-memory A500. Ned Kelly and others advised that "SCSI II" is a more stable interface format, and would probably succeed, whereas "SCSI I" had many variations and may not. Ned also discussed trying to hook up a SCSI CD-ROM to the BBS, and mentioned that CD players "take a lot of liberties" with the interface. There are CD drivers out there that work well, many available in PD-land.

The multi-talented Ned gave us an official METCOM report, with the

sincere hope that the club will be around next year to have another one! Attendees said the course offered was very worthwhile, and though there were a limited number of vendors present, there was a lot of Assorted Stuff in the flea-market for members to browse through.

We officially accepted the slate of Club Officers as nominated, and we salute them all for their efforts and willingness to take on the responsibilities of leadership. We salute Ned **twice**, as we do our own Steve Nichols, who is (reluctantly!) willing to wear both President and Vice-President hats for our chapter. (This means he has to stand in for himself if he's sick. See the problem? Can you help?) Other nominees are Dom Cummings for Librarian, Michael Turner for Secretary (Yay!), and Don Sobiek for Treasurer. We'll officially vote on these folks at the December gathering. Speaking of the December gathering, it will be our traditional bring-games-and-food occasion! Please bring along any games you'd like to share or show off, your Amiga (with all the power cords and stuff!) if at all possible, and a munchie to share. (I'll bring Assorted Stuff, you bring everything else!) This is a more relaxed social occasion, and we sure hope all of you who haven't been coming will come

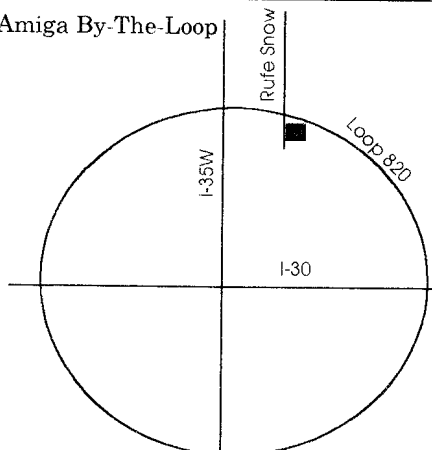
and be with us at this meeting. We promise we won't elect you to something behind your back if you come! Besides, it's fun! Come see the latest and the classics in the game world and take things a little less seriously for a while. (You can call me for help with directions, if you haven't been attending since we moved. 422-7131.)

Our presentation for the evening was offered by Jeff Robinson, who uses his Amiga in his Sign-making business. He started with MCCC years ago with his C64, which he got in 1985. (had a Vic 20 in 1981!) He got his A2000 in 1990, looking for ways to make money at home. He made some banners for a Tupperware event and the idea was born! Now he uses a package called *Sign Engine* to produce professional signs and banners of many types. The system cost him around \$8K total, with the plotter accounting for \$4K of the expense. To handle all kinds of orders, one might need an engraver, a router, etc., and equipment to produce silkscreen images for hats, t-shirts, etc. You might need presses to produce images on shirts. Still, a lot can be done with just signs and banners with the equipment he brought. You need something with which to produce the original art, like

Attention Amiga Users

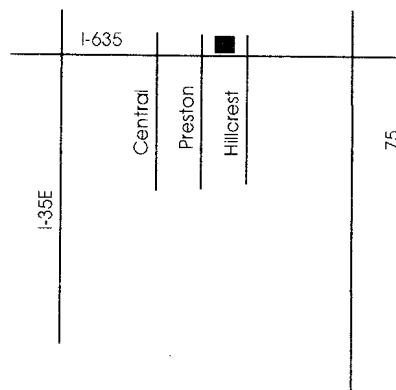
The Amiga Central Chapter will no longer meet beginning in January. Be sure to attend one of the other Amiga Chapters. We'll look forward to seeing you there.

Amiga By-The-Loop



Enter building at east end of north side.
Go upstairs to meeting room.

Amiga North Dallas



Enter building at east end of north side (in back)
Go downstairs to meeting room.

CHAPTER NEWS

Professional Draw, Pro Vector, Art Expression, etc. Some art can be scanned in, but in order to make it "clean" for the plotter you MUST do a good bit of work by hand. (All type fonts need to have "closed" figures — *Typesmith* does a good job of this.) A problem with some files, such as some clip-art from Pro-Draw, is that there are "stray points" inside the design. This isn't a problem when printing a picture, but when directing a plotter to draw or cut out a figure, an extra dot can cause problems! Jeff spends around an hour to "clean up" a clip-art or scanned image to prepare it for the plotter. This is part of his \$20/hour preparation fee. He showed us a teddy bear design that he had scanned from a company's duplicate check form, which he had spent 6-7 hours making into a plotter-ready design. Now that he's got it, though, it can be scaled by Sign Engine to create a small window decal, a side-of-the-car sign, or even a huge billboard. He's got a "virtual screen" capability, and the size of the output is really limited only by the length of a standard roll of vinyl (or whatever material he's using) and the maximum length of a single plot-line (96"). Designs covering a multi-roll area can be produced with slightly-overlapping segments that can be assembled to produce a large sign. A 10-yard roll of peel-and-stick vinyl (sort of like Contact Paper) is around \$100, although his materials vary with the quality and style required. A plain 3' X 10' banner would run around \$90 (standard type fonts only), with extra charges for graphics at the \$20/hour rate. The development fee might be waived if the image desired is a common design, or something he needs for his own library of artwork. The *Sign Engine* software can even drive an embroidery machine, to stitch your artwork into reality!

This was a fascinating glimpse into an Amiga really "doing

something"... I really appreciated a chance to see our machine earning its living so well! Jeff, thanks for sharing. If any of you members out there have any sign needs, you may look forward to having them produced on an Amiga driven system. You can call Jeff Robinson at 817-581-8854. He'll be glad to help.

Next month: party time! January: Ed Corr with an ARExx presentation. Be there!

Metro C64/128

Brenda Sessums

Hello, Metro C-64/128 Computer Users! At the November meeting we had many things going on at the same time. One thing was the election of new officers. Anyone not showing up at the meeting is a new officer and will receive a kitten. (You know who you are!!!) Another fun thing that was going on was Phil Heberer built an interface for printers to use with GEOS. It greatly enhances print speed and possibly print quality.

We are becoming quite famous. Commodore Country directs a lot of calls to me and Phil for technical assistance from people all over the country. Today I talked to people from South Carolina and Florida. You can meet some of the nicest people this way. Also, our chapter was listed in this month's issue of *Commodore World*, and we will also be listed in the user's group section of *AC's Guide to the Amiga* (probably the Spring issue). I just found out that Loadstar has a special price for club subscriptions. Anyone interested can contact me (Brenda Sessums) who will get you further details. Michael Sessums has received 12 disks with mostly HAM radio programs on them. We will be placing these disks in the club library.

The next meeting will be on December 10 at the NTHS Center,

from 1:30 to 4:30. By the way, if you have not received your disk magazine, *CEE 64 Alive!*, then you need to bring a blank disk and come and get it. We don't deliver, and unless you send a mailer and postage, well <grin> you get the message.

Now the important news — the new chapter officers are as follows:

Phil Heberer: President
Jack and PW Tarvin: Co-Vice Presidents
Jo Lynn Linville: Treasurer and Librarian
Brenda Sessums: Secretary
Mary Louise and Jack Hagemeyer: Educational Directors
John Burt: Software and Demo Director
Leonard Bowser: Technical Specialist
Sam Walton: Data Systems Coordinator
Sam Walton, Jr.: Director of Youth

We received newsletters from two other user's groups this month — "Commodore Hawaii User's Group" and "Greater Omaha Commodore User's Group." We also received a letter from the Hawaii user's group, asking some questions which I will try to answer. Commodore Country publishes a quarterly newsletter which should be out in about two weeks. Thanks to Hawaii, Omaha, and Commodore Country for copies of their newsletters. What is *Commodore Format*? *Commodore Format* is a magazine from Great Britain that is available from Commodore Country. It is packed with great C-64/128 information and reviews.

During our next meeting, more officers will be elected, so be there, or be elected "in absentia" to a post we'll invent just for you. Bring goodies to share (cookies, trail mix, etc.) and we'll have a great time. See ya soon... December 10th??? !!!

The Fine Print

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

Statement of Purpose: The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business.

Legal Stuff: The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC, C64, C128, and Amiga) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Meetings and Membership: Our meetings are open to all. Family membership dues are \$24 per year or \$15 for six months, and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware software library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional \$12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC multi-user Bulletin Board System.

The MCCC News

Copyright Information: Material printed in the MCCC News is not copyrighted unless so noted. Articles may be reprinted or otherwise distributed by other user groups or by individuals who may find it helpful as long as proper credit is given to the author and to the MCCC.

Advertising: The MCCC News accepts two kinds of advertising. Member ads are those which are submitted by a member and which are not of a commercial nature. There is no charge for member ads. Commercial ads are those which advertise multiple like items for sale. Rates for camera-ready commercial ads are as follows for a single month or (prepaid consecutive three months): Full Page — \$36 (\$96); Half Page — \$18 (\$48); Quarter Page — \$12 (\$32); Business Card — \$6 (\$16). Materials to be inserted will cost \$.08 per copy (duplication not included) and must be inserted into all newsletters for the month.

Articles: Members are encouraged to submit articles. Articles may be submitted as ASCII text or in Amiga *excellence!*, *ProWrite*, *WordPerfect* or *Final Copy* format. They may be uploaded to the MCCC BBS, to StarText, or submitted on disk. If these methods are not possible, I will, as a last resort, accept printed articles. If graphics need to be included they may be submitted as IFF files, DR2D, *PageStream* or *Art Expressions* structured drawings, *Professional Draw* clips or, again as a last resort, printed output.

Deadline: The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is 7am of the fourth Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail c/o Bill Raecke, 2614 Charolais Way, Arlington, Texas 76017.

Extra Copies: Extra Copies of the MCCC News are available at \$1 per copy. Orders should be forwarded with the required fee by the regular newsletter deadline.

MCCC Board of Directors

President	Ned Kelly	817-277-5825
Vice President	David Owens	817-577-2304
Treasurer	John Malmstrom	817-282-6158
Secretary	Okley Moss	817-282-7751
Librarian	Ned Kelly	817-277-5825
(C64/128 help)	Joe Ostrokol	817-534-1990
Education Chair	Harold Williams	817-483-0537
BBS Coordinator	Okley Moss	817-282-7751
Newsletter Editor	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
Past President	David Owens	817-577-2304

MCCC BBS Numbers

(METRO 14,400 BAUD)	817-268-4191
(METRO 14,400 BAUD)	817-268-4196

MCCC Chapter Officers

Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter

President	Ben Clingerman	817-621-8047
Vice President	Wayne Brodnax	817-244-0828
Treasurer	Bruce Nelson	817-498-0899
Secretary	Pete Goad	817-496-0509
Librarian	Gary Campbell	817-297-4125

Amiga Central Chapter

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Vice President	Harold Williams	817-483-0537
Treasurer	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
Secretary	Johnny Kitchens	817-649-8632
Librarian	Ned Kelly	817-277-5825

Amiga North Dallas Chapter

President	Danny Barnett	214-276-1330
Vice President	Steve Nichols	214-530-6345
Treasurer		
Secretary	Genny White	214-422-7131
Librarian	Wm. Dockendorf	214-407-0564

Metro C-64/128 Chapter

President	Jo Lynn Linville	817-783-2784
Vice President	John Burt	817-441-8115
Treasurer		
Secretary	Brenda Sessums	817-238-9891
Librarian	Phil Heberer	817-847-8232

Normal Meeting Schedule

1st Tuesday	MCCC Board of Directors
2nd Tuesday	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
2nd Saturday	Metro C-64/128 Chapter
3rd Tuesday	Amiga North Dallas Chapter
3rd Thursday	Amiga Central Chapter

SIGS

VidSIG	Chuck Johnson	817-478-7313
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec 6 MCCC Board of Directors
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

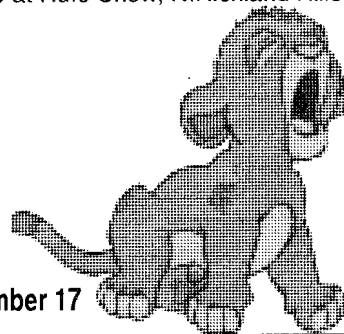
Dec 10 Metro C-64/128 Chapter
1:30 pm — Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine
Lancaster & Camp Bowie, Fort Worth

Dec 13 Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

Dec 15 Amiga Central Chapter
7:30 pm — Arlington Community Center
2800 S. Center, Arlington

Dec 20 Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — King of Glory Lutheran Church
6411 LBJ Freeway, Dallas

Jan 3 MCCC Board of Directors
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills



January Newsletter Deadline — 7am, December 17

These Dealers offer discounts to MCCC members
Be sure to show your membership card

ANSOFT Data Systems

Amiga Software & Hardware
2801 W. 7th Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76107
(817) 870-2529

Commodore Country

C-64, C-128 & Amiga Software
1420 County Road 914
Burleson, Texas 76028
(817) 295-7658

Metropolitan Computer

Amiga Software, Hardware & Repair
4372 Spring Valley
Dallas, Texas 75244
(214) 702-9119

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